



Delaware Senior Medicare Patrol

Medicare Fraud Informer

September 2015

SMP MISSION STATEMENT *to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.*

Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau WELCOME TO MEDICARE CLASS

Call 1-800-336-9500 to register

September 17, 2015

Rockland Place
1519 Rockland Road,
Wilmington, DE
10:00 a.m. -12:00p.m.

SMP Staff

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SMP Toll Free Number: 1-800-223-9074

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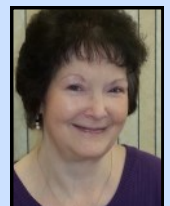
DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

SMP Informer Newsletter

Designed and Edited by:

LaVonda Lamb, SMP Volunteer



Message from SMP Project Director
Positions of Trust

Andrea Rinehart



The SMP volunteers undergo an extensive application, screening and training process. Generally, persons interested in volunteering have had some experience with Medicare in terms of reading Medicare summary statements, helping a loved one navigate provider bills, or are interested in helping their peers avoid becoming a victim of healthcare scams and fraud.

There are many roles volunteers could find of interest to them such as staffing exhibits (working the SMP table at health fairs or community events); making group presentations; counseling a peer Medicare beneficiary, family member, or caregiver; and/or handling complex issues and referrals of suspected fraud, waste, error, or abuse. These roles are considered “positions of trust” and as such SMP volunteers take the utmost care to protect the client’s personal information.

A SMP role will be considered a “position of trust” if it involves access to at least one of the following: Beneficiaries or other vulnerable people, personal or confidential information, or money or other valuables. Volunteer roles may also qualify as positions of trust due to the nature of the client.

In order to eliminate risk to the Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and to the program, in 2009, the US Administration on Aging (AoA), which is now part of the US Administration for Community Living (ACL), implemented volunteer risk management policies aiming to decrease and manage risks related to volunteer involvement in SMPs and to increase the management and coordination of volunteer efforts. Ultimately, this approach helps SMPs become safer for volunteers and beneficiaries, as well as helping decrease liability among the overall SMP program.

The SMP screening process includes a mandatory background check and a federal ‘criminal’ background check. Please note that the criminal background check is separate from the mandatory background check. The ‘criminal’ background check refers specifically (and only) to a check of an applicant’s criminal history. Conversely, the mandatory background check provides verification of identity, volunteer history and experience, education, and social security number. These documents containing this personal information are destroyed at the time the acceptance or unacceptance decision is made. Criminal records checks have become a staple screening device for positions of trust in most nonprofits and public service organizations. Both background checks protect the integrity of the Delaware SMP Project as we are a trusted source of information and assistance to many seniors in Delaware.

Only those applicants who consent to, and pass, a criminal background check will be permitted to work in a position of trust. However, applicants who do not consent to a criminal background check may still be approved to work in a role not considered a position of trust as outlined above.

If you are a volunteer or are interested in learning more about background and criminal background checks, please contact Steven O’Neill, Volunteer Services Coordinator at steven.O’neill@state.de.us.

Volunteer Voice - September 2015



“Older volunteers are finding ways to use their lifetime of skills and experience to make an impact on issues they care about,” said Dr. Erwin Tan, Director of Senior Corps, who serves as the expert U.S. source for the *Salute to Senior Service* program. “Whether they serve every day or a few times a year, older volunteers contribute to the health and vitality of their communities.”

The availability of more time now in their lives is just one of the reasons many volunteer. More important, they want to be agents for change in their communities. According to this research, their motivations include:

- 99 % want to help others
- 99 % want to make a meaningful difference in their communities
- 99 % want to provide assistance to causes they care about

A majority of senior volunteers say they experience significant health and emotional benefits from volunteering. Most (more than 90%) feel that seniors who volunteer are healthier and happier than those who do not volunteer. The specific personal benefits that keep seniors volunteering in the U.S. (according to Home Instead Senior Care network research) are:

- 98 % - I gain a sense of purpose
- 98 % - I stay active and feel better physically
- 98 % - I feel better mentally and emotionally
- 74 % - I am able to overcome feeling isolated
- 70 % - I am able to overcome feeling depressed

Many seniors enjoy the socialization aspect of volunteering— 4 in 10 seniors say they typically volunteer with someone else.

Thank you “Home Instead Senior Care Network” for the information found in this article

If you would like to learn more about volunteering for SMP Delaware, please contact me at: Steven.O'Neill@state.de.us, or call 302-255-9383.



Tips to prevent fraud



Do's

Do protect your Medicare number (on your [Medicare card](#)) and your Social Security Number (on your Social Security card). Treat your Medicare card like it's a credit card.

Do remember that nothing is ever "free." Don't accept offers of money or gifts for free medical care.

Do ask questions. You have a right to know everything about your medical care including the costs billed to Medicare.

Do educate yourself about Medicare. Know your rights and know what a provider can and can't bill to Medicare.

Do use a calendar to record all of your doctor's appointments and what tests or X-rays you get. Then check your Medicare statements carefully to make sure you got each service listed and that all the details are correct. If you spend time in a hospital, make sure the admission date, discharge date, and diagnosis on your bill are correct.

Do be wary of providers who tell you that the item or service isn't usually covered, but they "know how to bill Medicare" so Medicare will pay.

Do make sure you understand [how a plan works](#) before you join.

Do always check your pills before you leave the pharmacy to be sure you got the correct medication, including whether it's a brand or generic and the full amount. If you don't get your full prescription, report the problem to the pharmacist.

Do report suspected instances of fraud.

Don'ts

Don't allow anyone, except your doctor or other Medicare providers, **to review your medical records** or recommend services.

Don't contact your doctor to request a service that you don't need.

Don't let anyone persuade you to see a doctor for care or services you don't need.

Don't accept medical supplies from a door-to-door salesman. If someone comes to your door claiming to be from Medicare or Medicaid, remember that Medicare and Medicaid don't send representatives to your home to sell products or services.

Don't be influenced by certain media advertising about your health. Many television and radio ads don't have your best interest at heart.

Don't give your Medicare card, Medicare number, Social Security card, or Social Security Number to anyone except your doctor or other authorized Medicare provider.

Tales from the Trenches

Access to the SMP Message

Though summer is behind us, experiences during SMP outreach events in July and August linger in our minds, having heightened our awareness of the concept of “access” as applied to Medicare beneficiaries.

25 years ago, the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, or ADA, was signed into law, impacting literally tens of millions of Americans with disabilities not only by opening the doors to equal access to the kinds of normal life experiences that citizens should expect, but also by making it illegal to discriminate on the basis of disability. What generally comes to mind in terms of ADA regulations is the elimination of physical barriers, such as widening doors and restroom stalls in public places to accommodate folks using mobility devices. However, in the past 25 years, our nation as a whole has gradually come to identify the need for “access”—in every aspect of human activity – as a standard feature of everyday life in a country striving to grow in justice and equality.

When SMP staffed a table at the ADA anniversary celebration held on Saturday, July 18th on Dover’s Legislative Mall, the *majority* of visitors to our table were persons with disabilities and their family members or caregivers. We had the privilege of reaching out to Medicare beneficiaries with mobility, visual, hearing, intellectual, mental health, medical, and other disabilities, and a good many of these folks who stopped by were under age 65. Ramps and wheelchair-friendly coverings for the grass, a large-screen TV monitor, and sign language interpreters were all part of the landscape for this exciting event.

SMP Volunteer, Bob Ringer, assists a visually impaired beneficiary to understand the SMP materials at the Delaware ADA Celebration, July 2015.



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But how does this concept of **access** specifically apply to the Medicare beneficiaries we serve? **How do we identify and remove barriers to accessing the information and resources that we, as the SMP, provide?** To address this need we must **listen** to our beneficiaries, who are constantly teaching us what “access” to the SMP message means, personally, to them:

Access means language. During the August 9th *Festival Hispano*, at which SMP was represented, five different beneficiaries initially refused our packet, saying, “No...I no speak English,” until they were shown that the materials were printed in Spanish. Delighted, each of them then gratefully accepted a packet containing Spanish materials they could actually read.

Access means literacy-appropriateness. When SMP Project Director Andrea Rinehart came on board earlier this year, one of the first things she did was completely revise our “Grandparent Scam” brochure to simplify it, making it easier to read for lower literacy beneficiaries.

Access means visual/auditory accommodation. Group SMP presentations using our Power Point slides don’t begin until the projector display is adjusted to the level at which even folks at the back of the room can easily see it. However, recent post-presentation evaluation surveys have indicated that some beneficiaries could not clearly hear the presentation, leading us to explore purchase of portable amplification.

Finally, **Access means availability.** The tools and information we offer are only available because SMP volunteers are willing to serve out in the community where the beneficiaries are, as well as in our own personal circles of family, friends, and contacts, sharing what we know about staying safe from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse. On behalf of Delaware beneficiaries who have benefitted from our volunteers’ diligence in educating consumers about the SMP message, THANK YOU for making our state a SAFER –and more accessible—place.

